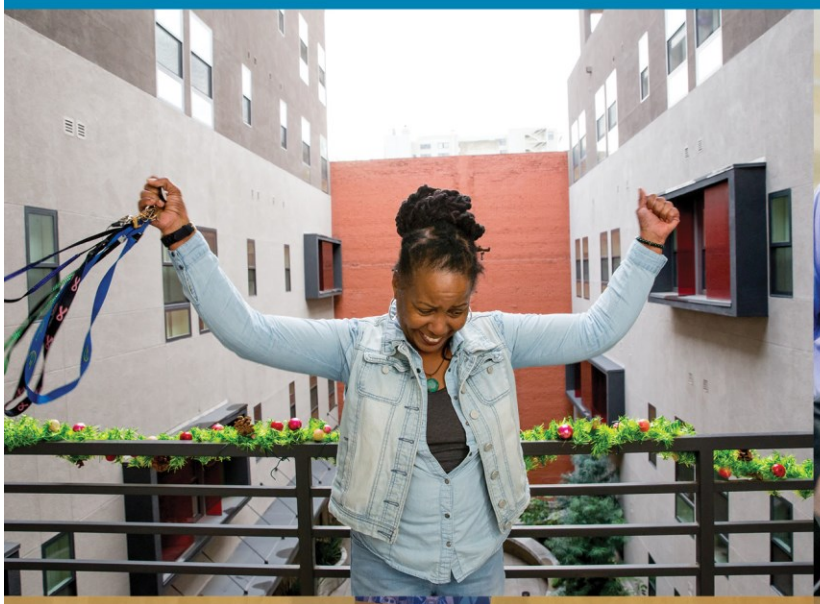
Developing and Passing Proposition HHH and Measure H:

How It Happened and Lessons Learned

Abt ASSOCIATES

EVALUATION OF THE
Conrad N. Hilton Foundation Chronic Homelessness Initiative



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Introduction

Since 2011, elected officials, governmental agencies, and community organizations throughout the City and County of Los Angeles have increasingly coordinated their efforts to implement strategies to address and reduce homelessness. Despite these efforts, over the past five years the region experienced an increase in homelessness, with a total of 57,794 people reported to be homeless according to the Point-in-Time (PIT) count on a single night in January 2017 across Los Angeles County.[1]

The rise in unsheltered homelessness has become increasingly visible to Los Angeles residents and public officials. Increases in the number of homeless people sleeping in parked cars or RVs or establishing tent cities and homeless encampments were visible to the public and gained media attention over the past three years, elevating homelessness to a top priority for the Los Angeles region.

Additionally, throughout Los Angeles, the demand for housing—especially affordable housing—has outpaced supply. The vacancy rate in Los Angeles was 3 percent in the first quarter of 2016 and declined to 2.4 percent by the fourth quarter, the second-lowest among the nation's 75 largest metro areas.[2, 3] The median costs to buy a home or rent an apartment have grown at rates unmatched by increases in median earnings, especially among lower-income households.[4, 5] In addition to creating precarious situations for renters, the low vacancy rate and lack of affordable housing make it particularly challenging for those individuals experiencing homelessness, to re-enter the housing market even with support, which can extend the duration of their homelessness.[6]

In 2016 and 2017, the City of Los Angeles and the County of Los Angeles sought voter support for two long-term, dedicated funding measures to increase resources for reducing and preventing homelessness throughout Los Angeles. Public visibility, attention from the media, increased political will from public officials, and the coordination of community efforts in effective campaigns once the measures were on the ballot all were instrumental in gaining the voter support needed to pass the measures:

- ***Proposition HHH***, approved by voters in the City of Los Angeles in the November 8, 2016, election, is a $1.2 billion Homeless Reduction and Prevention, Housing, and Facilities Bond, which among other things, will support the development of 8,000 to 10,000 permanent supportive housing (PSH) units within the City of Los Angeles over the next ten years.[7]

- On March 7, 2017, voters in the County of Los Angeles approved ***Measure H***, a countywide quarter-cent sales tax to fund supportive services, housing, outreach, and prevention services for people experiencing homelessness. It is expected to raise a total of $3.55 billion before it sunsets in ten years. Officials project that Measure H funding will be used to help approximately 45,000 households move into permanent housing within the next five years.[8]

At the request of the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation, Abt Associates examined the evolution of the political will and community support needed to develop and pass Proposition HHH and Measure H by interviewing key community stakeholders and campaign staff along with reviewing public materials from the City and County of Los Angeles. This report, part of a larger Abt evaluation of the

Foundation's Chronic Homelessness Initiative,[a] describes the steps taken by elected officials and public and private stakeholders to build on the political will and community support that had already been created for addressing homelessness in the LA region to develop these measures and get them enacted. The final section of the report draws out lessons learned from that experience that may be useful for other communities.

Photo Credit: Conrad N. Hilton Foundation

[a] More information about the community's overall work to address chronic homelessness can be found in the evaluation team's Annual Report: https://www.hiltonfoundation.org/learning/abt-associate-s-annual-evaluation-report-of-the-conrad-n-hilton-foundation-s-chronic-homelessness-strategic-initiative

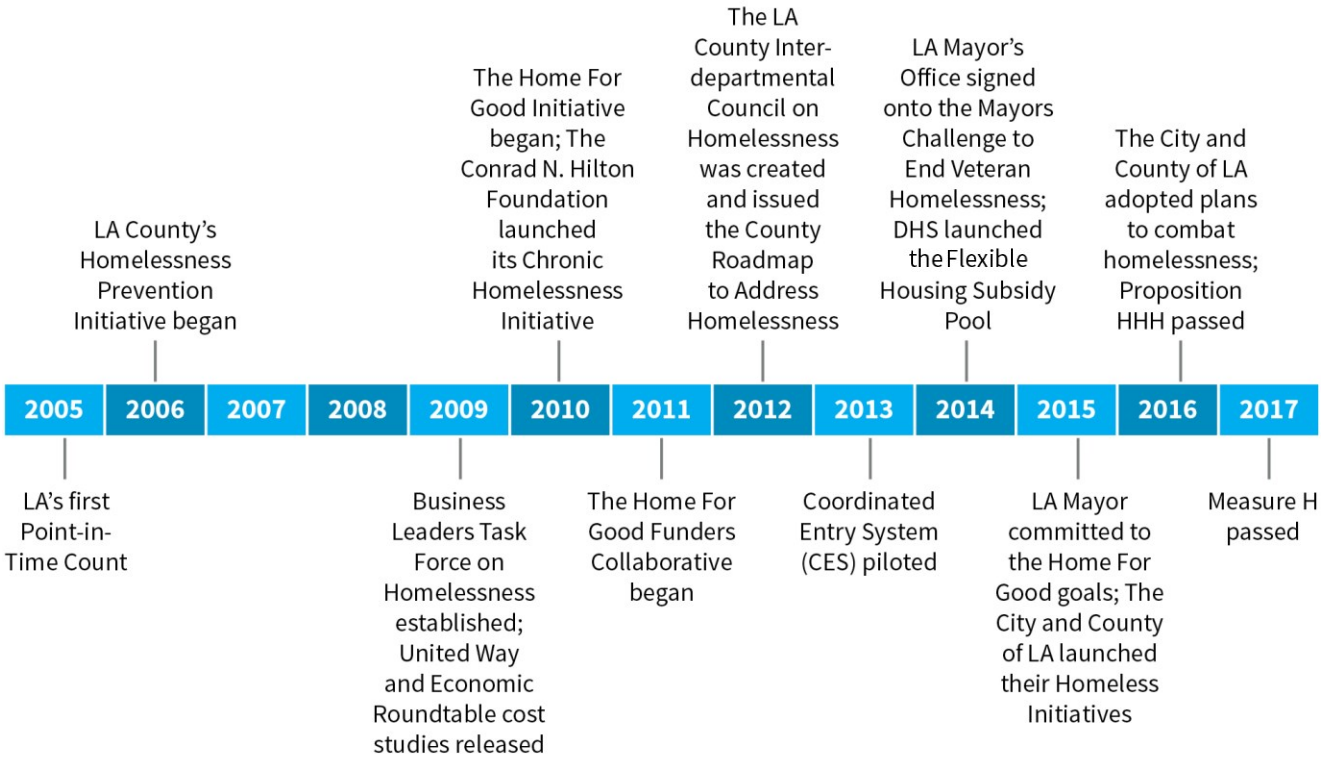
Building the Political and Community Will to Address Homelessness

Long before any funding measures were introduced, stakeholders were working aggressively to lay the groundwork for public support for permanent solutions to end homelessness. Over the past decade and a half, community organizations, elected officials, public agencies, and philanthropies organized strategic efforts to increase political will and awareness around homelessness while also investing in projects and systems to move people into stable housing. The success of each these efforts was critical to building public trust. These efforts were:

- Building a strong coalition of political and community support PSH as a solution to chronic homelessness;
- Creating a coordinated system to address homelessness and piloting successful projects throughout the community;
- Increasing the level of public awareness around homelessness across Los Angeles County; and
- Creating a set of coordinated comprehensive plans and strategies to address homelessness.

Ultimately, these efforts led to the public rallying to support Proposition HHH and Measure H. Each of these efforts and key community milestones are described chronologically in the sections that follow (as well as in Exhibit 1).

Exhibit 1: Key Milestones in Addressing Homelessness in Los Angeles



Source: Abt Associates

Building a Coalition of Support

Los Angeles has a complex network of public agencies, which historically suffered from a "lack of collaboration and aligned funding between cities and the County of LA and/or within the County," a "need for increased political [and public] will and funding for supportive housing," and a "need for a… means of prioritizing the homeless population for housing."[9] Throughout the past ten years, elected officials and other community stakeholders supported various efforts to improve coordination to address homelessness across the community. Each funding commitment brought more public and private entities into a consensus that drove toward the same goals. This coalition of service providers, private funders, community organizations, and public agencies was critical to the ultimate success of the ballot measures.

In 2004, the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation and the Corporation for Supportive Housing partnered to launch an ***Initiative to End Homelessness for People with Mental Illness in Los Angeles County***. These early investments supported the development of promising new program models and helped to engage public agencies and stakeholders in developing and operating PSH.[10]

In 2005, the Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority (LAHSA, an independent joint powers authority created by the City and County) conducted the first Point-in-Time Count in the LA region. The count reported 82,291 people experiencing homelessness at a point-in-time during January 2005.[11] As a result, in 2006, the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors approved the Homelessness Prevention Initiative which provided $100 million in one-time funding and $15.6 million a year in ongoing funding to support efforts to address homelessness in Los Angeles County.

In 2009, the United Way of Greater Los Angeles and the Economic Roundtable (a non-profit research organization) released reports on the cost of homelessness in Los Angeles County. These reports showed overall public cost savings when individuals experiencing homelessness are provided permanent supportive housing (permanent housing + supportive services) instead of living on the streets and regularly interacting with costly public systems such as emergency rooms, jails and criminal justice institutions, and substance use treatment facilities.[12,13]

Another milestone occurred in 2009, when the United Way of Greater Los Angeles and the Los Angeles Area Chamber of Commerce partnered to establish the Business Leaders Task Force on Homelessness. The purpose of the Task Force was to gather information on best practices to address homelessness and support coordinated initiatives to reduce and end chronic homelessness. In December 2010, the Task Force launched the ***Home For Good Initiative*** to end chronic and veteran homelessness in Los Angeles County.[14]

In 2010, the Foundation, building on its 2004-2010 initiative, launched the ***Chronic Homelessness Initiative***, a strategy designed to reduce and eliminate chronic homelessness within the Los Angeles County region. Since the beginning of its Initiative, the Foundation has made grants focusing on regional systems change and capacity-building, targeting programs to house and serve chronically homeless individuals, and disseminating knowledge on emerging and evidence-based practices to prevent and end chronic homelessness.

In 2011, the Home For Good ***Funders Collaborative*** was created to help align and simplify the funding processes for service providers serving individuals experiencing chronic and veteran homelessness. The Collaborative brought together representatives from philanthropic and private funders, the Los Angeles City and County government departments, the major local housing

authorities (the Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles and the Housing Authority of the County of Los Angeles), the Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority (LAHSA), other cities within the County, the United Way of Greater Los Angeles, and the Corporation for Supportive Housing (an intermediary that supports the development of supportive housing through funding and technical assistance and has an office serving the LA region). This was the ***first strategic attempt*** to coordinate public and private funding for community providers serving homeless populations.[15,b]

In addition to coordinating funding, Home For Good also expanded the base of public and political support around homelessness. By April 2012, the City and County of Los Angeles—along with 111 leaders of public and private organizations, including 26 elected officials—had endorsed the Home For Good Action Plan. The Action Plan encouraged partners across the LA region to create goals for an integrated homeless housing and service delivery system that focused on PSH as a solution to chronic and veteran homelessness.[16]

To further coordinate efforts addressing homelessness across the County, in 2012 the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors created the Los Angeles County Interdepartmental Council on Homelessness (LACICH). LACICH's goal was to develop a countywide plan that would end and prevent homelessness by coordinating resources across the several County agencies that provided services to homeless people and people at risk of homelessness, using best practices, and ensuring accountability and results. As part of this effort, LACICH issued a *County Roadmap to Address Homelessness* that identified PSH as the primary means to end chronic homelessness.[17] As a result, public and private investments in PSH began to increase.[18]

In June 2013, the City of Los Angeles elected a new mayor, Eric Garcetti, who demonstrated a commitment to Home For Good's goals and in 2014 endorsed the national Mayors Challenge to End Veteran Homelessness.[19] By 2015, a large number of elected officials and other stakeholders throughout the LA region had endorsed the Home For Good Action Plan to end chronic and veteran homelessness.

Additionally, at this time, federal and local leadership made significant nation-wide funding investments into housing for homeless veterans with the goal of ending veteran homelessness. [20] This included targeted investments by the federal government to help Los Angeles house its homeless veteran population.[21] As a result of these efforts, veteran homelessness declined both nationally and within Los Angeles, which saw a 32 percent reduction in veteran homelessness between 2014 and 2015.[22] The reduction in veterans experiencing homelessness in Los Angeles showed public officials and community stakeholders that an infusion of large-scale funding could have a significant impact on the efforts to combat homelessness in Los Angeles.

Overall, these cumulative funding initiatives and plans developed a foundation of community support across the LA region for increasing efforts to end homelessness. In addition, they brought public agencies, elected officials, and other community stakeholders ***into the same space to begin to coordinate resources, strategic plans, and goals.***

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[b] For more, see this report from the evaluation team: Abt Associates, *Home For Good Funders Collaborative: Updated Lessons Learned from Five Years of Coordinated Funding*, January 2017, https://www.hiltonfoundation.org/learning/home-for-good-funders-collaborative-updated-lessons-learned-from-five-years-of-coordinated-funding.

Creating a Coordinated Entry System and Piloting Successful Projects

Over the past five years, community organizations, public agencies, philanthropies, and private funders organized and funded several new strategies and approaches for coordinating resources and providing permanent housing for people experiencing homelessness. Community stakeholders were interested in moving towards a strategy that prioritized highly vulnerable clients for housing resources and supportive services. Several tools and pilot efforts were developed within the community to address the prioritization of these clients. ***These strategies demonstrated to the public that public agencies and service providers could implement effective programs, practices, and partnerships and were prepared to rapidly scale up solutions to meet the need in the community to prioritize and serve the highest acuity, most vulnerable clients.*** In 2014, two countywide initiatives were launched to coordinate and align efforts to address homelessness: the ***Coordinated Entry System*** and the ***Flexible Housing Subsidy Pool***.

Coordinated Entry System

In 2013, Home For Good and the Funders Collaborative began to incubate a Coordinated Entry System (CES) for single adults in Los Angeles designed to assess and house the most vulnerable people staying on the streets. *Coordinated entry* is an approach to ending homelessness that requires comprehensive coordination of all housing and services resources in a community to better match people experiencing homelessness to the appropriate housing resources. Developing the CES responded in part to a mandate for recipients of federal funds,[c] but designing and implementing a CES was uniquely challenging—and especially important—in an area as large (in geography and in the size of the homeless population) and as institutionally complex as Los Angeles.

In spring 2013, a group of community leaders and homeless service providers partnered on a pilot effort to develop a systematic and replicable approach for identifying and prioritizing highly vulnerable, chronically homeless people living in the Skid Row area of downtown LA for placement into PSH. The group undertook a second pilot effort over the winter of 2013–2014 to test the CES in 14 additional pilot sites. Near the conclusion of the second pilot phase, the Home For Good Funders Collaborative issued an RFP for almost $3.5 million to fund infrastructure and regional coordinators to implement the CES across the entire Los Angeles region.[d]

Since then, the Home For Good Funders Collaborative and LAHSA have funded the infrastructure and services needed to implement the countywide CES. LAHSA receives local funding from the City of Los Angeles and the County of Los Angeles and federal grant funding from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. CES requires both support for the infrastructure and staff implementing the system and effective community partnerships with homeless service providers to which people experiencing homelessness are prioritized and referred. The Housing Authority of the

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[c] The 2009 HEARTH Act amendment to the McKinney-Vento Act required communities across the country receiving federal homeless services funds to create a coordinated entry system to align the elements of the homeless service system in each community. The requirements were formally defined in the *Notice Establishing Additional Requirements for a Continuum of Care Centralized or Coordinated Assessment System* (CPD-17-01) published by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development in January 2017. See https://www.hudexchange.info/resources/.

[d] For more on the Coordinated Entry System see this report from the evaluation team: *A Coordinated Entry System for Los Angeles: Lessons from Early Implementation*, May 2015, https://www.hiltonfoundation.org/learning/coordinated-entry-system

City of Los Angeles, the Housing Authority of the County of Los Angeles, and the Los Angeles County Departments of Health Services (DHS) and Mental Health (DMH) have become key partners in CES.

The scaling-up of CES through coordinated efforts and resources across public agencies and service providers demonstrated to elected officials and other public leaders that a system-level approach that spanned traditional funding and resource siloes was feasible.

Flexible Housing Subsidy Pool

In 2014, the DHS Housing For Health Division, under the direction of Dr. Mitchell Katz, launched a rental subsidy program for the County's most vulnerable patients called the ***Flexible Housing Subsidy Pool*** (FHSP).[e] Based on the philosophy that housing is a crucial form of healthcare for patients without a stable living situation, the goal of the FHSP was to secure affordable housing for people experiencing homelessness who have complex physical and behavioral health conditions. The aim was to reduce the number of people with complex health needs living, and sometimes dying, on the streets. The benefit to Los Angeles would be the expected consequent reduction in costs associated with avoidable hospitalizations and emergency room visits by providing PSH to the agency's highest utilizers of these services.

FHSP pairs flexible rental subsidies with intensive case management services provided to clients by local community organizations. Dr. Katz established a goal of creating 10,000 units of supportive housing linked to the County's public health system.

Over the past three years, the FHSP has expanded to provide housing paired with intensive case management services to other homeless populations, including homeless adult felony offenders referred from the County's Probation Department, people diverted from the criminal justice system, and clients of the County Department of Mental Health. The Department of Mental Health, the Office of Diversion and Reentry, and the Probation Department transfer funds to the DHS Housing for Health Division for PSH and rapid re-housing that serves their referrals.

As of fiscal year 2017-2018, more than $70 million was committed to the FHSP, and, by the end of 2017, the FHSP had placed some 3,400 households into housing.

The creation of the Coordinated Entry System and the Flexible Housing Subsidy Pool demonstrated to public officials the feasibility of a ***countywide approach to reducing homelessness that included participation not only from the homeless services system but also from other systems that highly vulnerable homeless individuals may interact with regularly***--the healthcare, mental health, and criminal justice systems.

Increasing the Level of Public Awareness and Understanding the Current Need

Despite the increased political will and community support for addressing homelessness in the LA region and the dedication of resources for coordinated efforts, the 2015 homeless point-in-time (PIT) count—released in May 2015—indicated a 12 percent increase between 2013 and 2015 in the number

[e] For more on the Flexible Housing Subsidy Pool, see this report from the evaluation team: *History and Takeaways from Los Angeles County's Flexible Housing Subsidy Pool*, March 2017, https://www.hiltonfoundation.org/learning/history-and-takeaways-from-los-angeles-county-s-flexible-house-subsidy-pool

of people experiencing homelessness in Los Angeles County. The 2015 PIT count results provided a wake-up call for elected and public officials and provided a tangible way to talk with the public about the increased needs and created importance of taking additional, significant steps to prevent and end homelessness in Los Angeles.

To better understand the housing needed to address homelessness in Los Angeles, LAHSA conducted a housing gaps analysis for the City and the County of Los Angeles in late 2015. The analysis identified a homeless housing gap of 13,086 units—including emergency shelter, transitional housing, and PSH units—within the City of Los Angeles. Most of the City's housing gap for homeless people, 11,899 units, was identified as housing for individuals.[23] For the entire County of Los Angeles, LAHSA's report identified a homeless housing gap of 26,504 units—including emergency shelter, transitional housing, and PSH units. Again, most of the housing gap, 25,790 units, was identified as housing for individuals.[24]

The 2015 PIT count and the findings of the housing gaps analyses prompted City and County officials to think about how to scale efforts to address homelessness to a level commensurate with the need. The gaps analysis created concrete goals for unit production and associated costs. These goals anchored the HHH and H ballot measures' funding targets and serve as benchmarks as the measures are implemented.

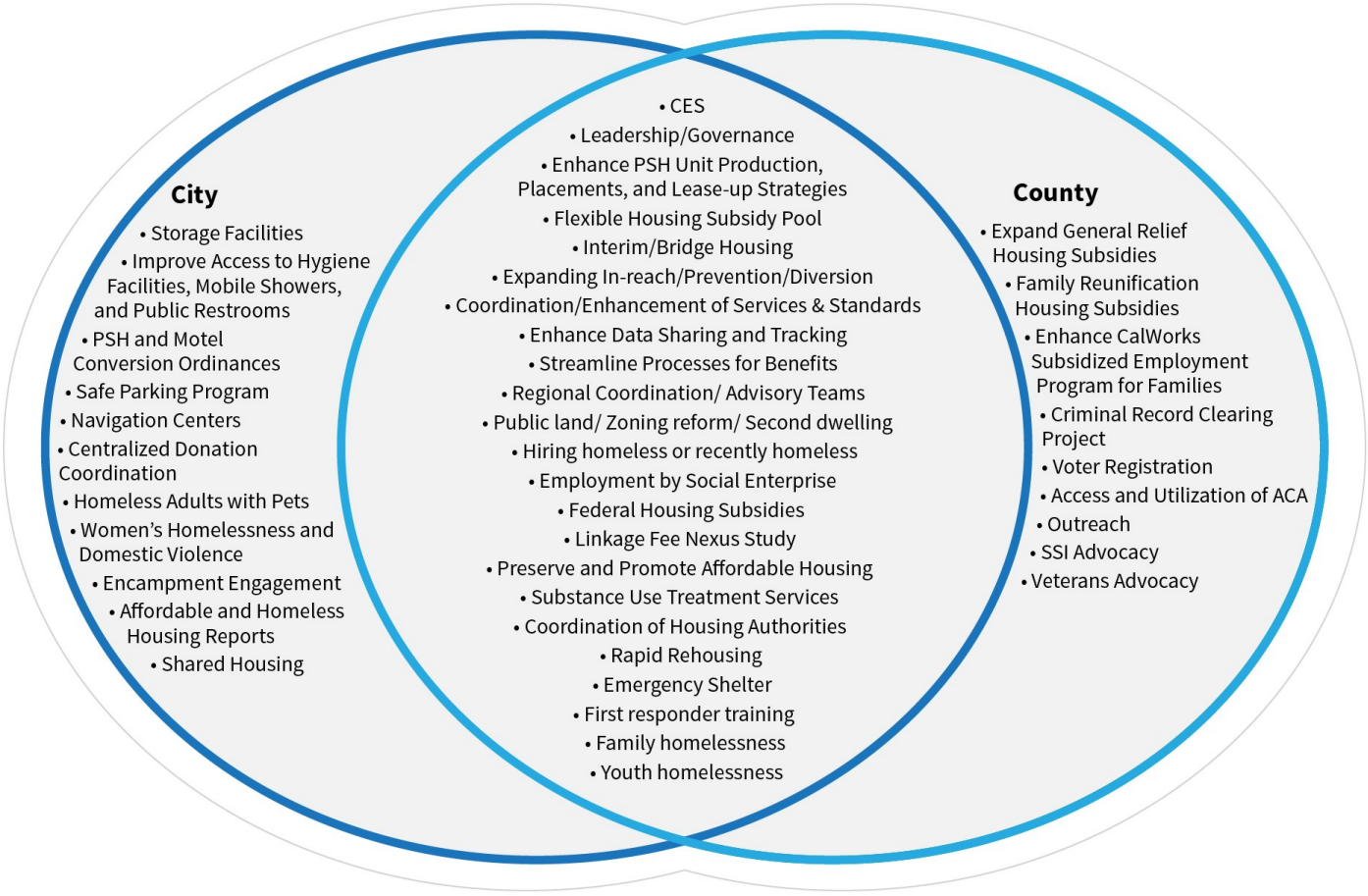
Creating Comprehensive Plans to Address Homelessness

Building on the coalition of support and the successful pilot initiatives, throughout 2015, the City, County, and community stakeholders worked together to develop two comprehensive plans that would synthesize the various efforts to end homelessness throughout the region. The City and County created aligned and interconnected strategies, each referring to the corresponding strategies in the other plan. The plans contained strategies designed to prevent homelessness, provide case management and supportive services, enhance the community's CES, increase affordable and permanent housing, and coordinate governance for the community's homeless service system.

In late 2015, the Chief Executive Office (CEO) Homeless Initiative, under the leadership of Initiative Director Phil Ansell, invited key stakeholders—including County department representatives, subject matter experts, and members of the community—to a series of 18 policy summits to provide their insights, suggestions for, and feedback on a set of strategies to prevent and reduce homelessness. The policy summits allowed County officials to hear public comment on proposed programs, policies, and housing development strategies.[25] To help align County and City efforts, representatives from the City of Los Angeles also attended the policy summits and reviewed the County's strategies.

As the County developed its Homeless Initiative, the City of Los Angeles worked to draft a strategically aligned set of comprehensive strategies (see Exhibit 2).[26] The City gave the task of developing its plan to two officials—City Administrative Officer Miguel A. Santana and Chief Legislative Analyst Sharon Tso. The City Council also had established a Homelessness and Poverty Committee, which worked with Mayor Garcetti and representatives from the County to support the alignment with the County's strategies.[27]

Exhibit 2: Alignment between City and County Homelessness Strategies



Source: Abt Associates

Observers in the LA region have characterized the collaboration of the City and County working towards the common goal of ending homelessness as "unprecedented." When interviewed by the Abt evaluation team, they said that this planning effort "felt different" from previous strategies or planned attempts to address homelessness. They attributed the change to the successful pilot programs that the new City and County plans could now take to scale.

On February 9, 2016, the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors and the Los Angeles City Council approved their respective Homeless Initiatives. Though neither the City nor the County had identified dedicated, long-term funding sources to support these plans, in 2016 each pledged a one-time funding allocation of approximately $100 million to launch implementation of some of its strategies. Both the City and County wanted to demonstrate their commitment to the community to work to end and prevent homelessness by acting on the plans as quickly as possible.

Creating Dedicated Funding Strategies

With the City and County's Homeless Initiatives approved in February 2016, community leaders needed to find long-term funding sources to finance and support the plans. By this time, homelessness had reached unprecedented levels across Los Angeles County. By this time, homelessness had reached unprecedented levels across Los Angeles County. The January 2016 PIT count recorded a 5.7 percent increase in homelessness over 2015, with 46,874 people reported as experiencing homelessness in Los Angeles on the night of the count – 74 percent of whom were unsheltered. During this time chronic homelessness had risen to 14,644 people—94 percent of whom were unsheltered.[28]

Throughout the County, the number of unsheltered homeless people increased, and more tent encampments became visible along public sidewalks and community outdoor spaces. Public opinion polls at that time showed that homelessness was the top priority for Los Angeles voters. Armed with this information, City and County officials believed it was the right time to seek voters' support for long-term, dedicated funding to address homelessness. Key stakeholders from the City and County worked collaboratively to determine the funding needed to support each Homeless Initiative plan.

Though both City and County homelessness plans outlined strategies for creating more housing and providing services to people experiencing homelessness, discussions about who should fund what focused on each governmental entity's strength in providing services in the community.

Over the past several decades, the City's Housing and Community Investment Department had made capital investments and built affordable and permanent supportive housing across the City. Additionally, the City oversees land use and development policies. Therefore, City leadership believed that pursing a dedicated funding source to create more housing for people experiencing homelessness was a logical and natural fit for the City. Whereas the City's strength was creating housing, the County's was providing services through its Departments of Health Services, Mental Health, and Public Health. The County had the infrastructure in place to deliver supportive services to people experiencing homelessness. Agreeing to this framework—the City building the housing and the County providing the supportive services—further solidified their collaboration in the community's efforts for ending and preventing homelessness.

These discussions led to the specifics of the City's work to develop Proposition HHH and the County's work to develop Measure H. The following sections of this report first describe each funding measure and then the campaigns mounted to get the measure approved by the voters.

Proposition HHH

In October 2015, the LA City Administrative Office submitted a report to the Mayor and the City Council's Homelessness and Poverty Committee on the shelter and housing gaps for people experiencing homelessness in the City. Together with the plans outlined by the City's February 2016 Homeless Initiative, this information on the size of the need was used by the several public and private entities that came together to consider potential funding sources for the new housing called for by the gaps analysis. City leadership worked with County leadership, the Corporation for Supportive Housing, LAHSA, the United Way of Greater Los Angeles, among others, to consider potential funding sources.

These public and private community stakeholders considered multiple funding options, including various fees and taxes, either already available to the City or needing voter approval.[29] Leading participants in these conversations advocated for a bond measure instead of the other options under consideration because private polling indicated that a bond would perform better in an election than the other funding options. Under the California state constitution, voter-approved bond measures are a way a local government can increase property taxes based on the assessed value of properties. Bond measures typically are selected by local governments to raise funding for major capital investments (buildings or infrastructure) because bond measures can raise a large amount of money up front and repay the money over several years. A challenge, however, is two-thirds of voters must support the bond for it to pass in California. Ultimately, City leadership decided to propose a bond measure to be placed on the November 2016 ballot.

Developing Proposition HHH

City leadership asked the Corporation for Supportive Housing to create financial models to estimate the resources needed to address the housing gap for homeless people estimated for that portion of the LA region that is within the City. In spring 2016, members of the City Council's Homelessness and Poverty Committee worked closely with the City Administrator's Office (CAO) to finalize the proposal. The bond measure's language went through several drafts, focusing on various housing programs such as affordable housing, permanent supportive housing (PSH), and assistance for first-time homeowners, before it reached a final version. Community organizations that were involved in these discussions fiercely advocated for the bond's language to focus on developing PSH so that the funding could help address the homeless crisis that the city was experiencing. City Council members were concerned about whether a bond that exceeded $1 billion would be approved by voters, but participants in the discussions such as the United Way, CSH, and LAHSA advocated for as much money as the City Council would agree to.

In the final form proposed by the City Council, Proposition HHH requested voter approval for a $1.2 billion bond to "provide safe, clean affordable housing for the homeless and for those in danger of becoming homeless, such as battered women and their children, veterans, seniors, foster youth, and the disabled; and provide facilities to increase access to mental health care, drug and alcohol treatment, and other services."[30] Despite this broad statement of purpose, at least 80 percent of funding from Proposition HHH was designated for the development of 8,000 to 10,000 PSH units within the City of Los Angeles over a ten-year period.[31] The bond would be repaid through a tax of approximately 0.01 percent of the assessed value of residential and commercial properties within the City. It was estimated the tax would cost an average homeowner approximately $10 per $100,000 of assessed home valuation per year.[32]

On June 29, 2016, the City Council took a final vote to place Proposition HHH on the November 2016 ballot, one day before the ballot measure deadline.

The Proposition HHH Campaign

Once Proposition HHH was placed on the November 2016 ballot, the Mayor, City Council members, County Supervisors, community organizations, and private stakeholders worked to raise awareness of the measure.

Elected officials sought endorsements from the Los Angeles Area Chamber of Commerce, the Los Angeles County Federation of Labor, and leaders from the business community. Elected officials and

leaders of community organizations spoke at press conferences seeking these endorsements. LA Voice, an interfaith community organization, became a champion for Proposition HHH, and this helped gain the support of LA's diverse faith communities. The United Way contacted more than 2,000 organizations in the Los Angeles area, asking them to publicly endorse the proposition. By the fall of 2016, public support for Proposition HHH was strong. Polls found between seven and eight of every ten LA City residents favored the proposition.

Campaign Efforts

SG&A Campaigns, an experienced campaign management firm in Los Angeles, led the media campaign, which was similar to any campaign for a candidate or a ballot measure that makes broad use of traditional and social media to try to reach and persuade voters and is hired by elected officials.

The United Way led and coordinated a community outreach campaign, which focused on bringing a coalition of homeless service providers together to assist with voter education and outreach. United Way's Home For Good team was brought into the campaign effort because of its expertise and experience working with housing and homeless service providers and other stakeholders building public support for the original Home For Good plan and earlier related efforts.

Leadership from the media campaign, led by SG&A, and the community outreach campaign, led by United Way, participated in weekly steering meetings, which served as a forum to provide feedback and review content of the campaign's messaging, outreach, and voter education. The United Way was able to help tailor messaging about homelessness for the media campaign coordinated by SG&A. Campaign efforts were divided between United Way and SG&A staff based on organizational expertise.

Major campaign efforts were the following:

- **Postcard Campaign**: The United Way's largest campaign effort leveraged its network of service providers by mailing hand-written postcards to nearly 100,000 voters who were considered likely supporters of Proposition HHH. A list of likely voters was acquired from Political Data Inc., a voter data provider. California-based campaigns can purchase voter lists from Political Data Inc. for electioneering purposes. United Way worked with approximately 40 homeless service providers across the community. United Way staff tasked service providers with recruiting volunteers, including people with lived homeless experience, to hand write messages to voters about why Proposition HHH was important to them on the back of the postcard shown in Exhibit 3. United Way staff saw the

Exhibit 3. Front Image of the United Way's "Vote Yes on Prop HHH" Postcard

Image provided courtesy of the United Way of Greater LA.

postcard writing campaign as a tactic to raise awareness of Proposition HHH not only among postcard recipients but also among the extensive volunteer populations of some service providers. Additionally, United Way and service providers encouraged volunteers to capture their postcard writing efforts on social media to further expand the reach of the campaign.

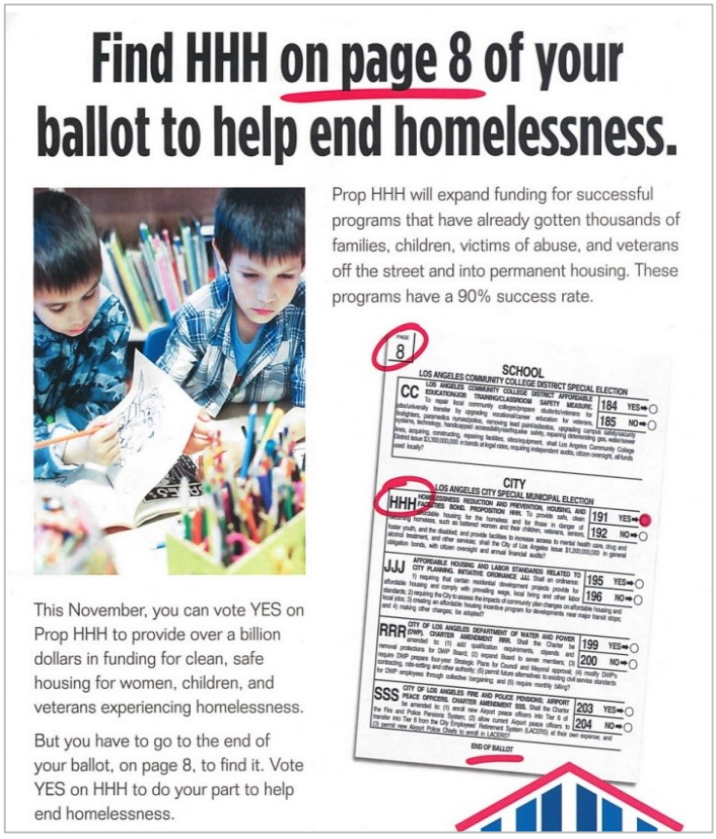
- **Media Endorsements**: The campaign sought the support of media, including the *Los Angeles Times*. To garner this key endorsement, elected officials, community organizations, the Chamber of Commerce, and representatives from housing providers appeared before its Editorial Board to explain the bond measure and the expected impact in the community. In addition to the *Times* endorsement, other newspapers serving communities in the LA region also supported Proposition HHH. In addition to explicit endorsements, media sources across the City featured articles about the bond measure over the course of the campaign, describing its intent and its expected impact on homelessness. These articles helped increase the public's awareness of the bond measure.

- **Digital Media Campaign**: SG&A and United Way staff packaged materials for supporting organizations to include in their mailings, listserv messages, and social media outreach. The materials provided information on Proposition HHH's intent, the City's need to build supportive housing, personal stories from people with lived experience of homelessness, and how voters could become involved in community efforts to help end homelessness. To expand the campaign's reach, digital materials were provided to anyone who visited the campaign's website. This allowed Proposition HHH supporters to repost and link to campaign messages on their own social media platforms.

- **Direct Mail:** In addition to direct mail about Proposition HHH that was sent to voters, campaign staff mailed flyers that showed where Proposition HHH would be found on the ballot (see Exhibit 4). This was important because the November 2016 ballot had many pages crowded with state and local initiatives, as well as candidates for office at the federal, state, and local levels.

- **Direct Telephone Outreach**: The campaign used both paid staff and volunteers to conduct telephone outreach to likely voters. SG&A hired a professional telephone bank as part of the media campaign to

Exhibit 4. HHH Ballot Awareness Mailing



Aaron Medelson, "#WhoMailedIt: KPCC Breaks Down the Political Mailers of Election 2016," 89.3KPCC [online], November 6, 2016, http://www.scpr.org/news/2016/11/05/65899/whomailedit-kpcc-breaks-down-the-political-mailers/.

call likely voters and made sure they knew that HHH was on the ballot. Community organizations recruited a diverse group of telephone volunteers, some with lived experience of homelessness who could tell their story. All telephone outreach encouraged people to vote.

- **Speakers' Bureau:** The United Way coordinated the development of a speakers' bureau for Proposition HHH and processed community requests for speakers at private and public events. Through the speakers' bureau, United Way staff ensured that the campaign conveyed consistent messaging and that its speakers took supporting materials such as flyers, buttons, and literature on Proposition HHH to each event. United Way staff leveraged the Corporation for Supportive Housing's Speak UP! Program, which trains people who have experienced homelessness in storytelling, advocacy, and public speaking. All bureau speakers were prepared to educate voters on Proposition HHH and how the development of 10,000 PSH units would help address the PSH housing gap across the City.

Fundraising the Cost of the Campaign

Overall, Proposition HHH's campaign cost approximately $2.2 million—$1.7 million through the media efforts coordinated by SG&A and $500,000 through the community outreach efforts coordinated by the United Way. The most costly campaign expenses were from direct mail to voters and phone outreach. Public disclosure statements indicate that the campaign spent more than $650,000 on literature such as flyers and mailings and more than $200,000 on direct telephone outreach.[33]

Major contributors to the Proposition HHH media campaign were the California Community Foundation, Airbnb, United Way of Greater LA, and the Mark Ridley-Thomas Committee for a Better LA. United Way's efforts were largely funded through donations from business communities, private foundations and public charities, and philanthropic individuals and families. Each campaign was careful to follow the lobbying rules applicable to particular donors. For example, public charities such as United Way generally funded lobbying activities, while private foundations focused on voter education activities.

Challenges Overcome

For Proposition HHH to pass, the campaign had to overcome several obstacles:

- **Voter Threshold**: The main obstacle the campaign faced was meeting the two-thirds voter threshold required to approve this type of bond measure in California. Most bond measures or proposed tax increases that require this threshold fail by a small margin, so a strong public awareness campaign was critical to Proposition HHH's success.

- **Length of the Ballot**: The November 2016 ballot for the City of Los Angeles was long, containing nearly 30 initiatives for voters to consider. Proposition HHH was on the last page of the ballot. Stakeholders were very concerned that even those voters who were supportive would submit their ballot before reaching the end and thus miss voting on Proposition HHH.

- **Formal Opposition**: Campaign staff were quick to reach out to a wide array of organizations to provide information about Proposition HHH and gain their support before formal opposition could be organized. Though there was no formal, funded opposition against Proposition HHH, a small number of anti-tax individuals published op-eds against it, citing alleged poor leadership in the City and County, insufficient coordination between the City

and County during the planning efforts for the City and County's Homeless Initiatives, and the fact that Proposition HHH would not generate enough revenue to provide housing to all people experiencing homelessness. The campaign did not respond to the op-eds directly, but its direct mailings and telephone outreach addressed many of these concerns.

Despite these challenges, Proposition HHH passed on November 8, 2016 with 76 percent of the vote – 916,518 people voted yes.[34]

Measure H

Los Angeles County's housing gaps analysis, conducted by the Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority (LAHSA) in January 2016, showed that the County needed approximately $450 million a year to provide housing and supportive services to meet the needs of the countywide homeless population, excluding any one-time capital costs for housing construction. As part of the housing gaps analysis, LAHSA projected annual and one-time costs required to fund a combination of permanent supportive housing (PSH housing and services), rapid rehousing, emergency shelter, outreach, housing navigation, homelessness prevention services, and regional system coordination.[35] In February 2016, the LA County Board of Supervisors directed the County's Chief Executive Office (CEO) to identify options for ongoing revenue that would generate this funding.

Developing Measure H

An initial list of possible funding options included a local income tax surcharge on millionaires, a marijuana business tax, a parcel tax, a general sales tax, and a special sales tax. To help guide the decision, in March 2016 the County CEO hired EVITARUS-David Binder Research, a public opinion consulting firm, to conduct telephone surveys to gauge the level of voter support for the possible revenue options. These telephone surveys examined (1) general public attitudes towards homelessness, (2) support for potential revenue measures, (3) optimal timing for placing a measure on a ballot, and (4) interaction with other ballot measures.

Though the income tax surcharge on millionaires had the support of the Board of Supervisors and poll respondents, elected officials in Sacramento did not support it and therefore the County was unable to secure the required change in State law to authorize the County to seek voter approval of this income tax surcharge. The income tax was dropped from consideration.

The option of a marijuana tax came with uncertainties because the legalization of recreational use of marijuana was already on the November 2016 ballot. The Board of Supervisors would need to decide whether to place a marijuana business tax on the ballot for medical marijuana, recreational marijuana, or both and to set tax rates. This left uncertain how much funding such a tax would generate for the County's Homeless Initiative. Additionally, some community members worried about the optics of linking a tax on a drug substance to funding for homelessness. The marijuana business tax, too, was removed from consideration.

This left two funding options:

(1) A general sales tax ballot measure, which needs a 50 percent +1 voter threshold to pass and would produce revenues that could legally be used for any purpose but would be accompanied by a second, simultaneous "advisory" measure to guide the use of the revenues towards funding the County's Homeless Initiative; or

(2) A special sales tax ballot measure, which needs a two thirds voter threshold to pass and that would be legally dedicated to fund homeless services specified in the County's Homeless Initiative.

The Board of Supervisors also had to consider how a homeless funding measure would affect other Board-supported funding measures already slated for the November 2016 ballot—a funding measure for the Parks Department and the Metropolitan Transportation Authority, as well as the City-sponsored Proposition HHH.

In March 2016, the County CEO engaged EVITARUS-David Binder Research to examine voters' attitudes and levels of support towards the two funding options and how the wording on the ballot would be perceived. EVITARUS-David Binder Research's polling indicated that voters supported the special sales tax over the general tax. Under California law a general tax increase requires a simple majority vote but a special tax requires a two-thirds majority. To boost support for the special sales tax, a sunset clause was added to end the tax after ten years.

During the telephone survey, EVITARUS-David Binder Research also gauged the public's support for a countywide homeless spending measure by examining voters' opinions on (1) supporting multiple County funding measures on the November 2016 ballot including measures on parks and transportation initiatives, and (2) the level of support for placing the homeless funding measure on a March 2017 ballot instead. Polling showed that the sales tax had the support needed to pass based on likely votes in either the November or the March election.[36] However, the Board of Supervisors as composed at that time voted against placing the homeless funding measure on the November 2016 ballot.

On December 6, 2016, shortly after two new members were sworn in, the Board of Supervisors voted unanimously to place Measure H on the March 2017 ballot. The final text for Measure H asked voters to authorize a quarter-cent sales tax for the next ten years to fund services for people experiencing homelessness. Measure H was projected to raise a total of roughly $3.55 billion and was expected to help approximately 45,000 households move into permanent housing during the first five years of implementation, while helping an additional 30,000 households to avoid becoming homeless. Measure H is expected to produce approximately $360 million a year. Additional funding needed to reach the $450 million a year identified in LAHSA's housing gaps analysis will still be needed and may come from federal funding, such as federal matching funds for supportive services through the Whole Person Care pilot, part of California's Medicaid waiver.

The Measure H Campaign

Reflecting the City-County partnership that had grown during the collaboration over the City's and County's homelessness plans, Mayor Garcetti and the Los Angeles City Council officially endorsed Measure H. The campaign also gained endorsements from housing developers, the business community, unions, faith- and community-based organizations, and the majority of cities across the County.[37]

To help gain additional endorsements for Measure H, the United Way of Greater Los Angeles engaged Move LA, a non-profit organization initially formed to develop coalitions around transportation measures in Los Angeles County. In November 2016, Move LA had completed a successful countywide campaign to win voter approval for transportation funding and was ready to keep its supporters engaged as it shifted to this new campaign seeking countywide funding to combat

homelessness. The United Way and Move LA leveraged their experience and networks to build a coalition of labor unions, the Chamber of Commerce, business groups, and grassroots organizations.

Campaign Efforts

As it did for Proposition HHH, SG&A Campaigns led and coordinated the media campaign, which focused on using traditional and social media to reach and persuade voters. The United Way led and coordinated the community campaign, which focused on coordinating homeless service providers to assist with voter education and outreach. Additionally, the United Way hired an in-house campaign manager to oversee its campaign efforts and serve as the communications director for the entire campaign. The United Way campaign manager engaged Fenton Communications, a communications firm with offices in Los Angeles, to support public education efforts. Fenton provided additional capacity to inform voters about the election and provide informational marketing about Measure H. Projected turnout rates were used to predict support and opposition. Campaign staff used polling data to create the language used for direct mail and telephone outreach to voters.

The United Way communications director acted as a bridge across the media campaign, the United Way, Fenton, and community organizations engaging in campaign efforts, ensuring that all parties' campaign outreach efforts were planned, strategic, and consistent. As part of this effort, the United Way communications director held weekly calls with the entire coalition to provide and receive feedback across the various campaign efforts.

The key strategies used to engage and educate voters were similar to those used in the Proposition HHH campaign. However, because Measure H was placed on the March 2017 ballot, which did not involve any federal or state elections and thus was expected to have a low voter turnout, staff needed to focus not just on voter awareness of the measure but also on voter turnout. The principal strategies used for the campaign were the following:

- **Telephone Outreach**: The campaign used both paid staff and volunteers to conduct telephone outreach to voters. SG&A hired a professional telephone bank as part of the media campaign to conduct telephone outreach. For this campaign as well, a list of likely voters was acquired from Political Data Inc. The United Way and the California Community Foundation coordinated five community organizations to conduct telephone outreach with volunteers. Because Measure H was a countywide campaign, United Way campaign staff provided community organizations with voter lists from their local communities. Additionally, the telephone messaging was crafted to address specific concerns about homelessness in each local community across the County. All telephone outreach encouraged people to vote.

- **Public Education:** Public education efforts included the development of standardized presentation materials to help explain Measure H's intent and how the funding would be used to end and prevent homelessness in Los Angeles County. Campaign staff and community supporters delivered presentations in a variety of forums throughout the County. About a month before the election, the United Way hired Fenton Communications to increase public education and awareness of Measure H. In collaboration with United Way campaign staff, Fenton developed digital advertisements for social media, as well as radio and newspaper advertisements explaining the County's Homeless Initiative, the services that Measure H would fund, and the number of people who would receive services if Measure H passed.

- **Digital Media**: Similar to Proposition HHH's digital media efforts, digital media materials were developed to provide information on Measure H's intent and personal stories from people with lived experience of homelessness. The United Way hired a full-time digital coordinator to leverage United Way's network of homeless service providers across the County to distribute campaign-developed digital media to their communities of supporters, volunteers, and clients and to post on their social media accounts.

- **Media Endorsements**: The United Way and the Chamber of Commerce, along with key community supporters, worked to gain the endorsement of the *Los Angeles Times* Editorial Board and members of the Los Angeles Newspaper Group by presenting information on the potential impact and long-term cost savings that Measure H would have in the County. Both officially endorsed Measure H. Journalists from the *Los Angeles Times* and other media sources wrote articles throughout the campaign, describing the potential impact of Measure H on homelessness in the LA region. Campaign staff and political supporters were also interviewed on radio and television.

- **Speakers' Bureau**: The United Way and Move LA worked together to organize a speakers' bureau similar to the bureau developed for Proposition HHH. The majority of the Measure H speakers were volunteers or members of supporting community organizations. As with Proposition HHH, United Way staff leveraged the Corporation for Supportive Housing's Speak UP! Program. Each speaker received training on Measure H's messaging and was provided with source materials developed by the United Way and Move LA. Speakers were selected based on their geographic location and their ability to speak to a particular audience. Because Measure H was a countywide ballot measure, it was important that speakers be able to respond to questions about the local community's needs and whether local organizations would benefit from Measure H's funding.

- **Postcard Campaign**: United Way engaged in a second postcard writing campaign that followed the same model used for Proposition HHH. Organizations and volunteers were recruited to mail about 65,000 postcards to likely voters (see Exhibit 5).

- **Slate Mailings**: The campaign purchased space to

Exhibit 5. Front Image of the United Way's "Vote Yes on H" Postcard

Image provided courtesy of the United Way of Greater LA.

advertise Measure H on several slate mailings. Slate mailings are commercially produced branded mailers endorsing specific candidates or measures that target a specific group of voters. Voters are able to take slate mailers into the polls with them to help guide their voting.

Fundraising the Cost of the Campaign

The total cost of campaign efforts was approximately $3.6 million —$3.4 million for SG&A's media campaign and $177,000 for the supporting United Way campaign. The major campaign expenditures consisted of the marketing and direct mail. Public disclosure statements indicate that the campaign spent nearly $1.8 million on slate mailers, literature (such as flyers) and mailings, and postage.[38] Additional major expenses of the campaign included approximately $390,000 for direct telephone outreach efforts, $326,000 on radio advertisements, and more than $250,000 on print advertisements.

Major contributors to the media campaign were Airbnb, CA Hospitals Committee on Issues, California Community Foundation, Chavez Ravine Land Company, Continental Development Corporation, Disney Worldwide Services, Majestic Realty, the Mark Ridley-Thomas Committee for a Better LA, NextGen CA Committee, PAMC Health Foundation, and Wanda America Investment Holding. United Way's efforts were largely funded through donations from business communities, private foundations and public charities, and philanthropic individuals and families. Each campaign was careful to follow the lobbying rules applicable to particular donors. For example, public charities such as United Way generally funded lobbying activities, while private foundations focused on voter education activities.

Challenges Overcome

For Measure H to pass, the campaign had to overcome several obstacles:

- **Voter Threshold**: The main obstacle Measure H faced was receiving the two-thirds voter majority required for a special tax measures to pass. As noted for Proposition HHH, many tax measures that require a two-thirds vote fail by a small margin, so strong public awareness and voter outreach campaigns were critical for success.

- **Voter Turnout**: Turnout for a March ballot is typically about 15 percent (compared to about 60 percent in a general November election), and the March election tends to draw more conservative voters, who do not typically support revenue measures. Placing Measure H on the March ballot was a political risk. Early polling indicated that the measure was within the margin of error from the beginning. However, political and community leaders thought it was the right time to act with addressing homelessness being a top priority in the region.

- **Voter Education**: Ensuring that voters understood Measure H's purpose was a challenge. The purpose of Measure H—funding supportive services for persons experiencing homelessness—is less tangible and harder to understand than the purpose of Proposition HHH—building housing. Thus, voter education was a critical component of the campaign.

- **Opposition**: There was no formal or funded opposition against Measure H, likely as a result of the County's public Homeless Initiative planning process and the campaign's thoughtful and swift action to educate voters. As with Proposition HHH, some anti-tax op-eds were published.

Despite these challenges, Measure H passed on March 17, 2017, with 69 percent of the vote – 585,905 people voted yes.[39]

Lessons Learned

The processes undertaken to develop and pass both Proposition HHH and Measure H required years of coalition building, strong public-private partnerships, well thought out City and County homeless strategy plans, and experienced leadership of campaigns in support of ballot measures. This section of the report summarizes the lessons learned from the process and provides considerations for other communities looking towards similar efforts to address homelessness.

- **Demonstrate capacity to implement**. To create the City's and County's strategic plans to address homelessness, community leaders engaged in a collaborative process that built a strong network and experience working to end homelessness among governmental agencies, homeless service providers, and other stakeholders. Key community organizations and, most importantly, voters saw the City and County work together in new, unprecedented ways. This visible City-County collaboration gave voters the confidence that public entities had a plan to end and prevent homelessness. By early 2016, after the approval of the City's and County's plans, observers concluded that the public was optimistic about the community's efforts to end and prevent homelessness. When Proposition HHH and Measure H were placed on the ballots, many observers reported to the evaluation team that they were hopeful that these funding measures could be enacted.
- **Communicate the need and purpose of funding**. Proposition HHH and Measure H were rooted in the City's and County's Homeless Initiatives. Both campaigns referred to the homeless strategies when speaking about how the funding would be used. Campaign advertisements used language from the plans and included data from the housing gaps analyses. The City and County were able to quantify the housing units to be built and the number of people experiencing homelessness to be served through each funding measure, showing the significant impact that the measures could have on reducing homelessness in the community. Many observers told the evaluation team that the City and County funding measures would have failed a year or two earlier—when the City and County had not yet developed their strategic plans, homelessness had not yet reached state-of-emergency levels, and voters had not yet put addressing homelessness in their community among their top priorities.
- **Assess the level of local political will and public support for funding homeless initiatives**. Understanding support for strategies to address homelessness among political leaders and the public is critical before launching the effort needed to create a funding measure. In Los Angeles, more than a decade of community coordination and collaboration went into garnering the political will and public support needed to develop and pass Proposition HHH and Measure H. Ultimately, the amount of time other communities pursuing this type of effort might require depends on local political conditions and planning efforts, voter engagement and education, issue visibility, and a track record of prior efforts to end and prevent homelessness.
- **Consider using polling to inform what type of funding measure to seek and what messages will persuade voters**. Communities need to consider the pros and cons when deciding what type of revenue measure to pursue—be it a bond measure to provide capital funding or a tax to produce ongoing revenues to support programs. Conducting research on voter opinions is important to understand voters' attitudes. Additionally, communities should

conduct research to ensure that the type of measure and amount of funding it will generate will be enough to have a real impact and generate results. Similarly, communities should develop strategic messaging around when voters will likely see those impacts and results. Homelessness cannot be solved overnight, and messaging needs to set realistic expectations.

- **Have vocal champions**. Getting Proposition HHH and Measure H approved required coordinated, strategic campaigns and strong, vocal, persistent champions publically advocating for the measures. Mayor Garcetti and Los Angeles City Council members Herb Wesson, Jose Huizar, Marqueece Harris-Dawson, and Mike Bonin advocated for Proposition HHH. Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors Chairman Mark Ridley-Thomas was a passionate and tireless champion for Measure H, as were each of the other four members of the Board. These public figures played a critical role, speaking at press conferences and disseminating information at public meetings. Having strong, respected public leaders advocate for the measures brought the needed political support. These champions, combined with the support of community organizations, various unions, and the business and faith communities, gave voters confidence that the funding measures were well planned and that their elected leaders supported them. Campaign staff and volunteers also were well versed on the details of each funding measure and the impact it could have on the community. Additionally, each campaign worked with people with lived homelessness experience to tell their stories through postcard writing and telephone outreach campaign efforts.

- **Educate the media**. Each campaign worked to develop strong relationships with the media. Campaign staff, along with community supporters, educated the *Los Angeles Times* Editorial Board on each funding measure's intent and expected impact, ultimately gaining the newspaper's endorsement. The media became a significant source of information about Proposition HHH and Measure H throughout each campaign. Several media sources, including the *Times*, wrote favorable articles about the two strategic plans, the two funding measures, and the City-County partnership. The campaigns used the *Times* endorsements and the press coverage to add third-party credibility to their efforts.

- **Ensure the campaign has enough time to effectively engage voters**. Voter education and outreach, including initial voter polling, is critical to the success of any ballot measure. The amount of time required to mount a campaign will vary by locality. Participants in the Proposition HHH and Measure H campaigns recommend launching a campaign that already has political and public support and favorable polling data at least three months before an election.

- **Involve cross-sector community organizations early to leverage their networks to conduct voter outreach**. Community organizations, homeless service providers, labor organizations, and transportation organizations were instrumental in raising awareness, educating the public, and assisting with campaign efforts for Proposition HHH and Measure H. Campaign leaders need to check that community organizations that might be tasked to help have the capacity and resources necessary. Metrics should be set to monitor the progress of organizations assisting with voter engagement, to ensure that campaign resources are being efficiently allocated for highest impact. This might include developing a standard reporting system where the organizations submit data on their outreach efforts. Such a system would allow campaign staff to monitor progress, benchmark organizations' performance, and reallocate resources as needed.

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